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SIPDIS
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AS](#)
SUBJECT: CONTENTIOUS PAST FOR AFGHAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE
FROM MELBOURNE

REF: 2009 CANBERRA 278

Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor John W. Crowley for reasons 1
.4(b)(d)

¶1. (SBU) Additional information has emerged regarding Abdul Khalig Fazal, an Afghan Presidential candidate from Melbourne, Australia that may raise questions about his viability. In a 2002 interview with Fazal, then the Minister of Public Works for Afghanistan, a reporter from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) challenged Fazal's credentials. ABC investigations showed that Fazal had taken the title of Dr., although no such title had been conferred by an institution of higher learning. Moreover, a Victorian court found Fazal guilty of selling counterfeit Reebok footwear. During the confrontational interview, Fazal focused his responses on ABC's attempts to discredit him as insulting to him and the Government of Afghanistan. He further denied allegations of having been an anti-monarchist or a spokesman for the Taliban. ABC presented 1979 documentation from a socialist newspaper alleged to have been authored by Fazal in support of its case. Fazal denied the alleged copyright infringements with Reebok, although the ABC interviewer stated that the court had ordered Fazal's company to pay Reebok costs related to the claim.

¶2. (C/NF) Daoud Yaqub, a Research Scholar in the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies at Australian National University and previously Executive Director of the Afghanistan Foundation, advised Embassy that Fazal was a senior figure in the Afghan Communist Party in the 1980's and reinvented himself in the 1990's as a cousin of Mullah Wakil Ahmed Muttawakil, the Taliban Foreign Minister. Yaqub explained that through Fazal's liaison with Mullah Muttawakil in efforts to link the Mullah with the former King's group, he became a Minister with the Afghan Government. Subsequently, according to Yaqub, Fazal has been successively demoted in his government roles. Yaqub suggested that Fazal's candidacy stems less from a genuine belief that he will be elected than from hope that a new government will name him Minister. Yaqub assesses Fazal's chances of securing a ministerial post as slim, noting that Fazal has "discredited himself to many consituencies".

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